



scratch my order

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I was excited and nervous at the same time. My anticipation made it difficult to concentrate on my schoolwork all that day. The final bell for school had come torturously slow, and in just a little while I would be on my way towards a new horizon. I would soon take the first steps in shedding the skin of childhood comforts and embracing the wonders and seemingly endless possibilities of adulthood. The catalyst for the life-changing event was the interview for my first real job.

I had worked odd jobs before, mostly mowing grass for various family members and friends. It was fun and somewhat rewarding, but profits from such endeavors were less than bountiful. To make matters worse, my parents would not allow me to have a car until I could pay for insurance and gas, which seemed an unattainable feat on lawn mowing wages.

The job to start me on the path to adulthood was to be found at Earl's Sub Shop. I had heard of the job through Lisa, friend of the family and part owner of Earl's. I expressed interest in the job and Lisa relayed the message to Angela, the shop manager. The interview was to take place at the sub shop about an hour after school. Since I did not have my own car, my mother had to drive me. To me this seemed like a bad idea. What would happen if she could not get me to work on time? Why couldn't I drive myself? It seemed a little unfair, but if I ever wanted a car, it would have to do.

The ride to the sub shop was quiet and uneventful. My mother, sensing I was nervous, tried to placate me with subtle conversation. I tried to think about what I should say during the interview and how I should act. I wondered exactly what I would be doing, what my job would entail, and how much money I would make. Finally, we reached the sub shop and went inside. This was it: the moment of truth.

As I looked around, I noticed the five or six people working behind the counter were female. I walked up to one of the women and introduced myself. She told me to wait there while she went to get Angela. I gave my mom a nervous glance and she just smiled back at me. After a few moments, an extremely attractive woman of about thirty came to the counter. At first, I could not speak. The thought of this woman as my boss was difficult to imbibe. I was expecting Angela to be a big elderly woman with a mean smirk and a sharp tongue. This was totally different. I was finally able to introduce myself only after a stern elbow from my mother. The formalities went well, but as I was filling out some of the paperwork, my nerves started to get the better of me.

Most all of us, during our teenage years, have had the displeasure of battling that horrible case of acne. Mild or extreme, we have all had to deal with the occasional outbreak. It just so happens that I was dealing with that occasional outbreak at the time of my interview at Earl's Sub Shop. While filling out one of the papers, I happened to nervously scratch a menacing zit. When I put my hand there again, I noticed it was bleeding a lot. I tried to hide it as best I could, but it was too late. My mom noticed my frustration and quickly began digging in her bottomless purse for a tissue. As I held it to my face, Angela came over to ask me something. When she noticed what was happening, she took a bewildered step backward. Two of the other girls working behind the counter came over to investigate. One kind of hid her face and continued what she was doing. The other just gawked at me as though I were some sort of circus freak. I had become engulfed in a quagmire of embarrassment. Fighting the urge to leave, I finished filling out the forms. Angela took a cursory glance at them and gave me a sympathetic nod. Shortly after that, we were on our way home; I was sure that I lost any chance of employment at Earl's.

Things seem to have a way of working out though. I received a call that evening to start work at the sub shop the next day. I started out as a stock boy, but was soon promoted to making subs. Almost two months after I started, I no longer had to rely on my mother for transportation. I worked at Earl's for exactly one year before our family moved.

I visit Earl's whenever I go back home and no one has ever mentioned the incident that occurred during my interview. I guess that I am thankful for that. Looking back on it now, it is funny, but it was one of the most embarrassing things that ever happened to me.